Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method for assisting a customer in choosing a combination of commodities, wherein the commodities are organized into N categories, wherein a combination is composed of one commodity selected from each category, and each commodity category has at least two commodity options, and wherein N is an integer greater than one, the method comprising:

(a) ranking, using a computer, the options within each commodity category based, in part, on at least one optimization parameter;

(b) creating, with the computer, at least N combinations of commodity options by:~

for each commodity category K of the N commodity categories, creating a corresponding combination K by:

(i) selecting a highest ranked option for the Kth commodity category;

(ii) automatically selecting any options in other commodity categories that are linked to the option selected in step(b)(i), wherein the other commodity categories includes any commodity category except the Kth commodity category;

(iii) selecting a valid option for each of the remaining commodity categories, wherein a remaining commodity category is any commodity category that has not had an option selected in steps (b)(i) or (b)(ii) for the Kth combination, wherein K is an integer running from 1 to N;

(c) calculating a total ~~effective~~ cost of each combination of commodity options; and

(d) presenting the at least N combinations of commodity options to the customer, whereby the customer selects a combination of commodity options for purchase.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of: visiting a web site by the customer; and

sending the preferences of the customer to the web site.

3.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein step (b) comprises the additional steps of:

(iv) selecting a next ranked option for a commodity category;

(v) selecting any options in other commodity categories that are linked to the option selected in step (b)(iv); and

(vi) selecting valid options for remaining commodity categories until the combination of commodity options is complete.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein steps (b)(iv), (b)(v) and (b)(vi) are repeated for a plurality of ranks.

5.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein step (d) comprises presenting the combinations of commodity options ranked by the total ~~effective~~ cost.

6.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein step (a) comprises ranking the options within each category by effective cost.

7.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein step (a) comprises calculating an effective cost for each option and ranking the options within each category by effective cost.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the effective cost calculations include bundling discounts.

9.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein step (c) comprises calculating a total effective ~~costs~~ cost for each of the combinations of commodity options by adding the effective costs of the selected options in the combinations of commodity options.

10.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein step (a) comprises the steps of, for each category:

(i) identifying at least one first parameter associated with a commodity option;

(ii) associating at least one value to the at least one first parameters;

(iii) calculating an estimated cost of the commodity option based on features of the commodity category that are desired by the customer;

(iv) obtaining from the customer a preference weighting on at least one second parameter;

(v) calculating an effective cost of the commodity option by adjusting the estimated cost based on the preference weighting and the at least one value assigned to the parameters; and

(vi) ranking the options within each category by effective cost.

11.   (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the parameter is a feature, an attribute, or a performance characteristic associated with the commodity category.

12.   (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein step (a)(ii) includes the steps of:

setting a range for the at least one first parameter;

sampling a random set of customers over the range; and

determining a best fit utility function using regression analysis on data received as a result of sampling.

13.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the utility function is stored in a first database, information about the commodity including bundling links is stored in a second database, and information about the customer is stored in a third database

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14.   (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the combinations created in step (b) are saved in the second database.

15.   (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the utility function is evaluated to obtain the at least one value, wherein the value represents a cost or benefit of the parameter to the customer.

16.   (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the value is subtracted from the estimated cost if it represents a benefit to the customer or the value is added to the estimated cost if it represents a cost to the customer.

17.   (Canceled).

18.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the commodity categories that are included in the combination are predefined.

19.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the commodity categories are services.

20.   (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the services include telephone service plans.

21.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the commodity are products and services.

22.   (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the commodity categories include wireless telephone services plans and handsets.

23 - 24.   (Canceled).

25.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein step (d) comprises presenting the combinations of commodity options to the customer, whereby the customer selects a portion of a combination of commodity options for purchase.

26.   (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a plurality of instructions for controlling a computing system to perform an operation for assisting a customer in choosing a combination of commodities, wherein the commodities are organized into N categories, wherein a combination is composed of one commodity selected from each category, and each commodity category has at least two commodity options, and wherein N is an integer greater than one, the operation comprising:

(a) ranking the options within each commodity category based, in part, on at least one optimization parameter;

(b) creating at least N combinations of commodity options by:

for each commodity category K of the N commodity categories, creating a corresponding combination K by:

(i) selecting a highest ranked option for the Kth commodity category;

(ii) automatically selecting any options in other commodity categories that are linked to the option selected in step(b)(i), wherein the other commodity categories includes any commodity category except the Kth commodity category;

(iii) selecting a valid option for each of the remaining commodity categories, wherein a remaining commodity category is any commodity category that has not had an option selected in steps (b)(i) or (b)(ii) for the Kth combination, wherein K is an integer running from 1 to N;

(c) calculating a total cost of each combination of commodity options; and

(d) presenting the at least N combinations of commodity options to the customer, whereby the customer selects a combination of commodity options for purchase.

27.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein the operation further comprises:

receiving a visit to a web site by the customer; and

sending the preferences of the customer to the web site.

28.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein the creating the at least N commodity combinations additionally comprises:

selecting a next ranked option for a commodity category;

selecting any options in other commodity categories that are linked to the option selected by the selecting a next ranked option; and

selecting valid options for remaining commodity categories until the combination of commodity options is complete.

29.   (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein the presenting the combinations comprises presenting the combinations of commodity options ranked by the total ~~effective~~ cost.

30.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein the ranking the options comprises ranking the options within each category by effective cost.

31.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein the ranking the options comprises calculating an effective cost for each option and ranking the options within each category by effective cost.

32.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the effective cost calculations include bundling discounts.

33.   (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the calculating a total cost of each combination ~~effective costs~~ comprises calculating a total effective cost for each of the combinations of commodity options by adding the effective costs of the selected options in the combinations of commodity options.

34.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the ranking the options comprises, for each category:

identifying at least one first parameter associated with a commodity option;

associating at least one value to the at least one first parameter;

calculating an estimated cost of the commodity option based on features of the commodity category that are desired by the customer;

obtaining from the customer a preference weighting on at least one second parameter;

calculating an effective cost of the commodity option by adjusting the estimated cost based on the preference weighting and the at least one value assigned to the parameters; and

ranking the options within each category by effective cost.

35.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 34, wherein the parameter is a feature, an attribute, or a performance characteristic associated with the commodity category.

36.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 34, wherein the associating at least one value includes:

setting a range for the at least one first parameter;

sampling a random set of customers over the range; and

determining a best fit utility function using regression analysis on data received as a result of sampling.

37.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 36, wherein the operation further comprises:

storing the utility function in a first database;

storing information about the commodity including bundling links in a second database; and

sorting information about the customer in a third database.

38.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein the operation further comprises saving the combinations in the second database.

39.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 36, wherein the operation further comprises evaluating the utility function to obtain the at least one value, wherein the value represents a cost or benefit of the parameter to the customer.

40.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 39, wherein the value is subtracted from the estimated cost if it represents a benefit to the customer or the value is added to the estimated cost if it represents a cost to the customer.

41.   (Canceled)

42.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein the operation further comprises predefining the commodity categories that are included in the combination.

43 - 44. (Canceled)

45.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein the presenting the combinations of commodity options additionally comprises providing to the customer means to select a portion of a combination of commodity options for purchase.

46. - 67. (Canceled)

68.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the optimization parameter comprises a utility function.

69.   (Canceled)

70.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the utility function is determined at least in part based on a regression analysis.

71.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the utility function represents at least one of a cost or a benefit.

72.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein the optimization parameter comprises a utility function.

73.   (Canceled)

74.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 72, wherein the utility function is determined at least in part based on a regression analysis.

75.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 72, wherein the utility function represents at least one of a cost or a benefit.

76.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 70, wherein the regression analysis employs at least one constant to determine the utility function.

77.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 74, wherein the regression analysis employs at least one constant to determine the utility function.